

A New Species of Spider Crab of the Genus *Leptomithrax* Miers, 1876 (Crustacea: Brachyura: Majidae) from New Caledonia

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ABSTRACT. A new species of spider crab of the genus *Leptomithrax* Miers, 1876, is described from New Caledonia. *Leptomithrax lowryi* sp. nov. belongs to a group species that includes *L. bifidus* (Ortmann, 1893) and *L. sinensis* Rathbun, 1916, but differs in the structure of the carapace spines and teeth, ischium of the third maxilliped, male thoracic sternal structure, shape of the male telson and the first gonopod.

Introduction

The waters of New Caledonia have been intensively sampled during the last 40 years, and our knowledge of the decapod Crustacea has been significantly increasing (Ng & Richer de Forges, 2007; Richer de Forges *et al.*, 2013). Much of its waters were designated as a marine park in 2014, the “Parc naturel de la mer de Corail”, but explorations, especially of the deep sea, are still uncovering new species on a regular basis.

In the Majidae Samouelle, 1819 (*sensu* Ng *et al.*, 2008), it is somewhat surprising that the genera *Maja* Lamarck, 1801 and *Leptomithrax* Miers, 1876 have not been reported from New Caledonia so far (*cf.* Ng & Richer de Forges, 2007). The main difference between these closely related genera is the position of the antennal flagellum: it is distinctly outside of the orbit in *Leptomithrax* but is inside the orbit in *Maja* (Sakai, 1976; Griffin & Tranter, 1986; Ng & Richer de Forges, 2015). *Maja* was recently revised by Ng & Richer de Forges (2015) who split it into 10 genera,

with only one, *Sakaija* Ng & Richer de Forges, 2015, reported from New Caledonia (see also Ng & Richer de Forges, 2021). *Leptomithrax* needs to be revised, with Ng & Richer de Forges (2015) noting it was not monophyletic. Ng & Richer de Forges (2015) removed one doubtful species of *Leptomithrax* (*L. kiiensis* Sakai, 1969) to a new genus, *Rathbunaja*, with *Maja bisarmata* Rathbun, 1916, as the type species. Of the 15 recognized species of *Leptomithrax*, four are from northwestern Asia: *L. edwardsii* (De Haan, 1835), *L. bifidus* (Ortmann, 1893), *L. sinensis* Rathbun, 1916, and *L. eldredgei* Richer de Forges & Ng, 2015 (Sakai, 1976; Dai & Yang, 1991; Ng *et al.*, 2017); six from southern Australia: *L. gaimardii* (H. Milne Edwards, 1834), *L. sternocostulatus* (H. Milne Edwards, 1851), *L. tuberculatus* Whitelegge, 1900, *L. waitei* (Whitelegge, 1900), *L. globifer* Rathbun, 1918, and *L. depressus* Richer de Forges, 1993 (Richer de Forges, 1993; Davie, 2002; Poore *et al.*, 2008), and the remaining taxa are from New Zealand (Bennett, 1964). The present paper describes the first species of *Leptomithrax* from New Caledonia.

Keywords: Decapoda, Majoidea, taxonomy, new species, comparative morphology, western Pacific

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